

THE ORATION AND DECLARATION OF THE FRENCH KING, HENRIE the fourth of that name, and by the grace of God King of Nauarre.

*Uttered out of his owne mouth, to the Lords and Gentlemen of
his Armie, before the Citie of Paris, the eigh
day of this present moneth of
August 1590.*



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1590.

THE ORATION
AND DECLARATION
OF THE FRENCH KING, HENRI
the fourth of that name, and by his son

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO





THE ORATION AND DECLARATION
of the French king, Henrie the fourth
of that name, and by the grace of God,
King of Nauarre.

*Vttered out of his owne mouth to the Lords and Gentlemen
of his armie, before the Citie of Paris the 8. day
of this present moneth of August. 1590.*



MY Lords, I do not doubt, but
the most part of you do well
remember the precepts and
solemn othes which my L. the
late king deceased (my prede-
cessor) caused me to make in
the presence of you all, for the
tranquillitie and peace of this
Kingdome. that day wherein
he was hurt. seeing himselfe
nere his end. If you be remembred, among many other
matters, he chiefly charged me with this one principall
point, that I should maintaine all my subiects in free li-
bertie to vse their conscience in both religions: that is to
say, the reformed religion, and the Romish religion, until
that by a generall, or nationall Councell a better resolu-
tion might be made thereupon. Insomuch as his Maiestie
said there was no other manner to pacifie the troubles
& dissensions of this Kingdome, but that if God had gran-
ted him the grace to haue reigned longer, he would haue
voted this reade and singular remedie aforesaid. Which I
tell you my Lords, and also I pray you to beleue that I
haue nothing in so great care as to keepe all my othes and
vowes, which I haue already done and shall doe hereaf-

ter: and specially this same, for that it is of great importance.

And thus I am informed that some of the nobilitie of this armie do spread abroad that they cannot doe mee service, unless I make profession of the Countie Religion: and thereupon they will forsake mine army: meaning thereby to trie whether I should be so impudent as to give over and recant that which is dearest vnto me in this world, that is to say, my religion and mine othe.

Wherefore (my Lords) at this present I haue caused you to be assembled, to the end I might declare in your presence that I am resolved (and I pray vnto God, rather to take me out of this world, then it should be otherwise) not to varie nor change in any wise my religion, neither do any thing contrarie vnto mine othe, before I be instructed by a holy Councell: the which I will heartily yield vnto, and be ready to follow the same: wishing nothing more then that such men should depart from mine army, choosing rather to haue one hundred of faithful Frenchmen on my side, then two hundred of such fained friends: because I am sure that God is alwayes with them that be good.

Two causes there be (as I beleue) that moue these men to leaue this Darnell: the one is the oth which they haue made long since vnto the enemies of this realme: the other is the malueritie and assurance which do appeare in places of valor and honor. Wherefore let not such men be afraid to demand our licence to depart: for I openly declare vnto them that they are not so ready to request it, as I am willing to grant it vnto them. Notwithstanding I am very loath, that they be no better Frenchmen only for their owne profit, and for no other cause. For although generally it should for sake me (which thing I cannot beleue)

And thus I haue declared vnto you the cause of this assembly, which I haue caused you to be assembled to, to the end I might declare in your presence that I am resolved (and I pray vnto God, rather to take me out of this world, then it should be otherwise) not to varie nor change in any wise my religion, neither do any thing contrarie vnto mine othe, before I be instructed by a holy Councell: the which I will heartily yield vnto, and be ready to follow the same: wishing nothing more then that such men should depart from mine army, choosing rather to haue one hundred of faithful Frenchmen on my side, then two hundred of such fained friends: because I am sure that God is alwayes with them that be good.

I have friends enough at my commandement for to maintaine me to their shame in mine authoritie. And if all those meanes should faile me, yet Gods my sure strength and shield: who hath accompanied me with his holy & myraculous blessings from my birth to this present: whereof all ye are witnesse. For David neuer came better into his kingdome of Iherusalem without all hope and force of men, nor with more labour and perill; then I am come into this same my kingdome; in such a sort that I confesse in very deed that God hath myraculously brought me into it, and established me therein. Whereouer if all mans help should faile me; for to maintaine me therein, yet I knowe; that the almightie God will neuer faile me: assuring my selfe that he hath not begon such a myraculous worke for to leane it vnpersuad, and not onely for my sake, but also for his holy name; and for to manie persons that are afflicted in diuers sortes in this mine sturte kingdome, who cris for mercie: to whom also I desire to succour: and I doe promise as a king to performe it as soone as God will giue me leaue.

Let then this companie of euill speakers cease, and let them truely beleene that neither this Crowne, nor the Empire of all the whole earth were able to make me chaunge the Religion wherein I haue bene brought vpp and instructed from my mothers pappes, and the which I vphold to be true: and also that I acknowledge nothing but the onely word of God to be my guide and to reforme me to a holy counsell as I haue said heretofore.

All ye, my Lords, doe knowe that I am a true and naturall Frenchman: and I am such a one as men need not to doubt of me. For my actions in time past may testifie how I haue vsed my selfe in the behauiour of that which

A iii.

I haue

I haue bene witness to the Justice of the same, and knowe that
I haue reigned in my kingdom of Nauarre being a coun-
trie vnder mine obedience. It is easie to be indoged what
I am, though I haue great occasion to feele my selfe wronge
doe for the wronge done vnto me of the enemie of this
croune. I will not saye more of this.

Forasmuch, my Lorde, I knowe you for to thinke howe paine it
 is for me, being your king, and leaving you in libertie for
 the exercise of your religion, to forbeare, that there should
 be some among you, yea of the better sort, whoe would en-
 deavour themselves to rule me according to their owne
 opinion. For this cause I pray all good men of this realme
 and others of this realme to be iudges thereupon. And
 forasmuch as none can be perfect, I pray you al my Lorde,
 if I haue forgotten any thing concerning my dutie, to
 pray with me unto the Lord God continually to conuict
 and assist me hereafter with his holy Spirit, for the increas-
 ing of the kingdome of his sonne Iesus Christ, and for the
 entertainment of mine estate, and also for the comfort of
 mine owne subjects.

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